

SC008485

Choices Home for Children Limited

Monitoring visit

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is privately run and owned. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six young people who may have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

There is no registered manager for the setting.

Inspection date: 21 January 2019

This monitoring visit

This home is subject to a restriction of accommodation notice and two compliance notices relating to regulation 13 (leadership and management) and regulation 14 (care planning). There are concerns regarding weak leadership and management, and poor care planning.

The purpose of this monitoring visit was to evaluate the progress that the home has made in addressing the concerns within these areas of practice, and to check the actions taken by managers to meet the steps laid out in the regulation 13 and 14 compliance notices.

The home has complied with the restriction of accommodation notice, as no additional young people have been introduced to the home. However, given the need for managers to consolidate the work that has recently begun, the restriction of accommodation notice remains in place.

The responsible individual gave full assistance to the inspector for this visit as the manager was not available.

At this visit it was found that young people are receiving care that is more responsive to their needs. For example, young people now benefit from having daily planners that offer a clear routine to support their learning and their attendance at education provisions.

Those young people who are not in full-time education are being given regular opportunities to supplement their formal learning through activities that promote life skills. In addition, staff explore apprenticeships and college courses that reflect young people's interests and longer-term ambitions. Positive reinforcement through incentives is also used with young people, to support the advice and expectations of staff.

Staff now spend a greater amount of focused time with young people. In addition, both young people have been allocated independent advocates. They have also been offered services from drug and alcohol workers and sexual health workers, and are soon to be offered support from the home's psychologist.

These services and focused key-working delivered by staff better reflect young people's needs and care plans. Young people's responses to these additional services are mixed, although one young person does engage with her advocate and sexual health worker. The impact of this work is yet to be realised.

There is now a stable and permanent core staff team in the home. This stability offers young people the opportunity to develop trust and relationships with the adults who care for them. Young people are slowly beginning to respond to this change.

Systems for enhancing team-working among the staff have been introduced by the managers. For example, there are detailed handovers from one staff shift to another. This promotes consistency among staff and reduces the potential for important information to be missed or not actioned. This practice needs to be embedded and the system does not yet ensure that staff who have been away from work have read previous handover documents.

Managers now have better oversight of staff practice and are more aware of the indicators of progress or concern for young people. For example, incidents of missing from home, educational attendance, significant incidents, physical interventions, key-working by staff and the use of 'consequences' with young people are now reviewed by managers. However, incidents that are not considered significant and levels of engagement with staff do not form part of this review. The areas currently reviewed are not cross-referenced with each other. As a result, opportunities to develop greater understanding of young people's progress are missed.

Neither the manager nor the responsible individual were in possession of the action steps as laid out in the compliance notices. They were therefore unaware of the actions that need to be taken in order to complete full evaluations and analysis of placement breakdowns, admissions and discharges, and the impact of these upon young people. This data would support and inform the future development of the home. As a result, a requirement has been made with regard to this issue.

The responsible individual, however, was able to offer insight into the key areas that have been identified as requiring improvement and change. For example, since the previous inspection, staff have undergone training in areas such as safeguarding, self-harmful behaviour and brain development, and in the model of care that is laid out in the home's statement of purpose.

In addition, assessments that will evaluate the possible impact of young people joining the home are to be implemented. Young people's risk assessments and placement plans have also been reviewed and updated.

Steps have been taken by managers to evaluate the outcomes for young people, and the staff's abilities to meet young people's needs. The manager and the responsible individual have requested care planning meetings with the local authorities to review the efficacy of the current placements and this has led to significant changes to some young people's care plans.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
13/11/2018	Full	Inadequate
05/09/2017	Full	Good
28/02/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
02/08/2016	Full	Outstanding

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that– (a) helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and (b) promotes their welfare. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to– (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home (Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(2)(h)). With particular reference to completing a full evaluation and analysis of placement breakdowns, admissions and discharges and the impact upon young people.	11/02/2019
The education standard is that children make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure– that staff help each child to achieve the child's education and training targets, as recorded in the child's relevant plans; help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible. (Regulation 8(1)(2)(a)(b)(i)(viii))	11/01/2019
The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who– understand the children's home's overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children; use this understanding to deliver care that meets children's needs and supports them to fulfil their potential; In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to– understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff– understand and apply the home's statement of purpose; protect and promote each child's welfare;	11/01/2019

provide personalised care that meets each child's needs as recorded in the child's relevant plans, taking into account of the child's background; help each child to develop resilience and skills that prepare the child to return home, to live in a new placement or to live independently as an adult. (Regulation 6(1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(i)(iv)(v)(vi))	
The health and well-being standard is that— the health and well-being needs of children are met; children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and children are helped to lead health lifestyles. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff help each child to— achieve the health and well-being outcomes that are recorded in the child's relevant plans. (Regulation 10(1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(i))	11/01/2019
The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— mutual respect and trust. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— meet each child's behavioural and emotional needs, as set out in the child's relevant plans; understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships with children; understand and communicate to children that bullying is unacceptable; and and have the skills to recognise incidents or indications of bullying and how to deal with them. (Regulation 11(1)(a)(2)(a)(i)(ix)(xii)(xiii))	11/01/2019
The registered provider must notify HMCI without delay of any incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40(4)(e))	11/01/2019
The registered person must maintain records for each child which— include the information and documents listed in Schedule 3 in relation to a child; are kept up to date; and are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36(1)(a)(b))	11/01/2019
Schedule (4) sets out the other information that the registered person must keep in relation to a children's home.	11/01/2019

The registered person must— maintain in the home the records in Schedule 4; ensure that the records are kept up to date. (Regulation 37(1)(2)(a)(b))	
The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 applies to the home— the registered person must ensure that the requirements of that Order and any regulations made under it, are complied with in respect of the home (Regulation 25(2)(b)). With particular reference to the home following the fire safety risk management measures within the home's fire safety risk assessment.	11/01/2019
The registered person must review the appropriateness of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard). When conducting the review, the registered person must consult, and take into account the views of, each relevant person. (Regulation 46(1)(2))	11/01/2019

Recommendations

- The independent return interview should be carried out within 72 hours of the child returning to their home or care setting. ('Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care', January 2014, page 14, paragraph 32)
- Staff should continually and actively assess the risks to each child and the arrangements in place to protect them. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 42, paragraph 9.5)

Information about this inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the children's home since its last Ofsted inspection.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: SC008485

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Choices Home for Children Limited

Registered provider address: c/o Afford Bond, 31 Wellington Road, Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 7ED

Responsible individual: Linda Heywood

Registered manager: post vacant

Inspector

Pauline Yates: social care inspector

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